

# SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress  
2nd Session

Vote No. 227

July 26, 2000, 10:18 a.m.  
Page S-7590 Temp. Record

## TREASURY APPROPRIATIONS/Cloture on the Motion to Proceed

**SUBJECT:** Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2001 . . . H.R. 4871.  
Lott motion to close debate on the motion to proceed.

### ACTION: CLOTURE MOTION AGREED TO, 97-0

**SYNOPSIS:** As reported, H.R. 4871, the Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2001, will provide \$29.434 billion in new budget authority (BA) for the Department of the Treasury, Postal Service, Executive Office of the President, and various independent agencies. This amount is \$1.4 billion more than provided last year and is \$2.3 billion less than requested.

On July 24, 2000, Senator Lott sent to the desk, for himself and others, a motion to close debate on the motion to proceed to the bill. The motion was made after Democrats indicated their intention to filibuster any effort to consider any of the annual appropriations bills.

NOTE: A three-fifths majority (60) vote is required to close debate.

After the vote, Democratic Senators engaged in extensive post-cloture debate.

**Those favoring** the motion to proceed contended:

The Clinton/Gore Administration has indicated to Republican Members that it is not interested in signing any of the appropriations bills unless every new spending demand it has is met. Republican Members have sought input from the White House on what exactly those demands may be, but it has refused to enter into any discussions. Our impression is that the Clinton/Gore Administration has decided that it is in its political interests to grind the Government to a halt. It seems to want to force the Government to shut down, or, perhaps, to delay matters so that it can gain leverage over Congress by forcing it into negotiations on a giant, year-ending spending bill. Our Democratic colleagues appear to have gotten their marching orders from the White House, because this week they are refusing to allow anything to even be considered.

(See other side)

YEAS (97)				NAYS (0)		NOT VOTING (2)	
Republicans (53 or 100%)		Democrats (44 or 100%)		Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (0 or 0%)	Republicans (1)	Democrats (1)
Abraham	Hutchinson	Akaka	Johnson			Thomas <sup>2</sup>	Torricelli <sup>2</sup>
Allard	Hutchison	Baucus	Kennedy				
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Bayh	Kerrey				
Bennett	Jeffords	Biden	Kerry				
Bond	Kyl	Bingaman	Kohl				
Brownback	Lott	Boxer	Landrieu				
Bunning	Lugar	Breaux	Lautenberg				
Burns	Mack	Bryan	Leahy				
Campbell	McCain	Byrd	Levin				
Chafee	McConnell	Cleland	Lieberman				
Cochran	Murkowski	Conrad	Lincoln				
Collins	Nickles	Daschle	Mikulski				
Craig	Roberts	Dodd	Moynihan				
Crapo	Roth	Dorgan	Murray				
DeWine	Santorum	Durbin	Reed				
Domenici	Sessions	Edwards	Reid				
Enzi	Shelby	Feingold	Robb				
Fitzgerald	Smith, Bob	Feinstein	Rockefeller				
Frist	Smith, Gordon	Graham	Sarbanes				
Gorton	Snowe	Harkin	Schumer				
Gramm	Specter	Hollings	Wellstone				
Grams	Stevens	Inouye	Wyden				
Grassley	Thompson						
Gregg	Thurmond						
Hagel	Voinovich						
Hatch	Warner						
Helms							

#### EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Business  
2—Necessarily Absent  
3—Illness  
4—Other

#### SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea  
AN—Announced Nay  
PY—Paired Yea  
PN—Paired Nay

Senate Democrats have offered two lame excuses for their obstructionism--they have said that they will not allow the Senate to pass any of the funding bills that are necessary to keep the Government running because Republicans have not let them have votes on issues such as the minimum wage, firearms, and health care, and because they have not allowed enough votes on judges. Both excuses are untrue. We have voted on numerous Democratic amendments on various issues, and in most cases we have voted on them several times. Some of those amendments have passed, others have failed; nothing is gained, though, by voting on the same proposals over and over again. We understand that sometimes Senators may have political motivations, but a 30-second attack ad based on a mischaracterization of one vote on an amendment can be made just as easily as an attack ad based on 12 votes on exactly the same amendment. Our colleagues, of course, understand this fact--they are not really fighting for a chance to offer their amendments, over and over and over again--they are just trying to waste time. The excuse regarding judges is just as invalid. This Republican Congress has bent over backwards to confirm judges, even though the people whom have been confirmed would not have been on any short list of candidates that Republicans would have put together. At the ends of the Reagan and Bush presidencies, when Democrats controlled the Senate, the vacancy rates were nearly double what they are now under President Clinton. Moreover, the Majority Leader has offered to confirm even more of the pending nominees (many of whom have not yet even been reported from the Judiciary Committee), but now the Minority Leader wants to have the unprecedented right to dictate whose nomination will be brought to the floor and when. Again, Democrats understand that they have been treated much more fairly than they ever treated Republicans when they were in the majority, but still they complain. Their complaints, though, are not serious; they are just an excuse for delay.

Many Democrats, for political purposes, want to attach a "do-nothing" label to this Congress. For that label to stick, they need to prevent Congress from doing anything, which is why they manufactured their two lame excuses as their reason for stopping Congress from making progress in passing appropriations bills this week. Average Americans watching this debate have little understanding of the Senate rules. They do not understand what it is to filibuster a motion to proceed. They do not understand that filibustering was once a rare tactic, especially on appropriations bills and especially on motions to proceed, but is now employed almost as a pro forma matter by Democrats, no matter how urgent it may be to pass a particular bill. Average Americans will see only bickering on the Senate floor, and will assign blame to both sides. Our Democratic colleagues, therefore, may get the political gain they are trying to achieve. They will be guilty but both sides will be blamed, nothing will get done, and they may be able to win votes in the upcoming election as a result. Under Senate rules, there is little we can do to stop the minority from playing this type of political game. All we can do is continue to try to move the appropriations bills forward. Depending on how the American people perceive this debate (in other words, if Democrats start to drop in the polls), our Democratic colleagues may all of a sudden find out that Congress really can work after all. Instead of stalling, they may work with us to pass the spending bills and other bills, such as a Medicare reform bill that provides prescription drug benefits.

On grounds of policy, and process, our colleagues' stalling is indefensible. If they succeed in even preventing the consideration on the Senate floor of some appropriations bills, the only place those bills will be debated at all will be behind closed doors on a giant, end-of-the-year omnibus bill. Negotiations on such bills are typically between a handful of Members of Congress and low-level political hacks at the White House. Under our system of government, Congress is supposed to draft legislation after a careful, deliberative process, and the President may approve or veto it. Under the twisted omnibus procedure, though, the White House drafts the bills in negotiations with a few Members, and then the bills are presented, on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, to Members of Congress. Members vote without having any clear idea of the contents of the omnibus bills, and they are usually asked to vote right before adjournment and right before an election, when they are under great pressure to return to their States to campaign. If an omnibus bill is voted down, Congress must remain and renegotiate with the President. In this procedure, Congress effectively cedes most of its constitutional authority to the President, and typically billions of dollars are wasted in unjustified spending. The omnibus process has often been likened to a train wreck. Our Democratic colleagues, this week, seem to have decided they want a train wreck.

**While favoring** the motion to invoke cloture, some Senators expressed the following reservations:

We Democrats would really love to enact all of the appropriations bills on time, and we would also really love to enact legislation on issues such as gun control and health care. Unfortunately, Republicans have decided that they want to run the Senate like the House. They do not want to vote on and pass legislation that is important to Democrats. Also, they do not want to vote on judicial nominees whom they oppose. We cannot let our Republican colleagues dodge casting hard votes. The Senate has a long history of protecting minority rights. We believe that in order to defend the rights of minorities in the Senate, we must block the Senate from proceeding on all bills until Republicans agree to vote on more issues of importance to Democrats and agree to vote on more judges. We will support this motion, but, unfortunately, we have no choice but to continue our delaying tactics.

**No arguments were expressed in opposition to the motion.**